



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Emergency Beacon Registrations

The Department of Commerce will submit the following information collection request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and clearance in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, on or after the date of publication of this notice. We invite the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. Public comments were previously requested via the Federal Register on 12/17/2021 during a 60-day comment period. This notice allows for an additional 30 days for public comments.

Agency: National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

Title: Emergency Beacon Registrations

OMB Control Number: 0648-0295

Form Number(s): None

Type of Request: Regular submission, Revision of a currently approved information collection.

Number of Respondents: 343,808

Average Hours Per Response: 15 Minutes

Total Annual Burden Hours: 85,952

Needs and Uses: The United States, Canada, France, and Russia operate the Search and Rescue Satellite-Aided Tracking (COSPAS/SARSAT), a satellite system with equipment that can detect and locate ships, aircraft, and individuals in distress if an emergency radio beacon is being carried.

This system is used to detect digitally encoded signals in the 406.000-406.100 MHz range, coming from these emergency beacons. The 406.000-406.100 MHz beacons transmit a unique identifier, making possible the ability to combine previously collected data associated with that beacon and transmit this vital data along with the beacon's position to the appropriate rescue coordination center.

Persons buying 406.000-406.100 MHz emergency radio beacons are required to register them with NOAA prior to installation. These requirements are contained in Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations at 47 CFR 80.1061, 47 CFR 87.199 and 47 CFR 95.1402.

The registration data is used to facilitate a rescue and to suppress the costly consequences of false alarms, which if unsuppressed would initiate the launch of a rescue mission and thereby deplete limited resources and possibly result in the loss of lives. This is accomplished through the use of the data provided to the rescue forces from the beacon registration database maintained by the NOAA's United States Mission Control Center (USMCC) for Search and Rescue, to contact the distressed person(s) or alternate party via a phone call or radio broadcast. Other data provides rescuers with descriptive material of the element in distress. The registration information must be kept up-to-date.

Four registration forms are used. The EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) form is used for nautical beacons. The ELT (Emergency Locator Transmitter) form is used for aircraft beacons. The PLB (Personal Locator Beacon) is used to register portable beacons carried by individuals. Ship Security Alerting System (SSAS) beacons are carried aboard ships, are similar to EPIRBs and are used in the event of an emergency situation such as piracy or terrorism.

These forms are being updated in response to the development of 406MHz second generation beacons (SGBs), which are in development and are projected to be available to the public in 2023. Changes to the forms are as follows:

23-Hex Beacon ID line: SGBs have 23-character hexadecimal unique identifiers.

NOAA's 406 MHz Beacon Registration Database (RGDB) currently allows registrations for first generation beacons (FGBs) that contain 15-character hexadecimal identifiers. Once SGBs are on the market, beacon owners will have the capability to register either FGBs or SGBs in the RGDB. Even though each registration will be for only one beacon ID, the hardcopy registration form must contain separate lines for FGBs and SGBs due to the differing number of characters and their presentation on manufacture labels and packaging— FGB IDs are presented in groups of 5-5-5 and SGB IDs will be 6-6-6-5.

Old 23-Hex ID: This field was added to enable registration of a replacement SGB beacon. The RGDB will continue to capture data for both FGB and SGB replacements.

Beacon Serial No.: This field was added to capture the beacon's serial number, which appears on the manufacturer-supplied label and/or on the beacon or its packaging. The serial number provides additional verification of the beacon ID and can be used by RGDB staff to resolve cases of incorrect or duplicate beacon IDs.

Other: An Automatic Identification System (AIS) Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) number was added to the EPIRB form. The following fields were added to the PLB form to provide additional pertinent information to search and rescue (SAR) forces: Radio Call Sign (on EPIRB form), Vessel MMSI # (on EPIRB form), AIS MMSI # (just added to EPIRB form), and Aircraft Registration (Tail) No. (on ELT form).

Affected Public: Individuals or households; Business or other for-profit organizations; Not-for-profit institutions; State, Local, or Tribal government; Federal government

Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory

Legal Authority: Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations at 47 CFR 80.1061, 47 CFR 87.199 and 47 CFR 95.1402.

This information collection request may be viewed at www.reginfo.gov. Follow the instructions to view the Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be submitted within 30 days of the publication of this notice on the following website www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain. Find this particular information collection by selecting "Currently under 30-day Review - Open for Public Comments" or by using the search function and entering either the title of the collection or the OMB Control Number 0648-0295

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[FR Doc. 2022-05792 Filed: 3/17/2022 8:45 am; Publication Date: 3/18/2022]